

**Wells College Education Program
Annual Assessment Report and Action Plan
2021**

I. Program Assessment Meetings

The faculty of the Wells College Education Program (WCEP), Jennifer Suriano, Susan Wansor, and Victor James Young, met weekly when classes were in session throughout the 2020–2021 academic year. These meetings were held during the fall semester on Mondays at 1 and during the spring semester on Tuesdays at 245. Each meeting generally lasted at least one hour, during which we discussed: revisions to course sequences, pedagogical challenges, ideas for alumni outreach, updates to course texts and materials, alignment between outcomes and goals, impacts of Covid-19 on the preparation of future teachers, and alternatives to high-quality field experiences due to restrictions. Meeting notes were recorded at each occurrence and are saved and accessible to all program members through the shared drive. The program's administrative assistant, Linda Catino, occasionally attended meetings as well during the Spring semester.

II. Closing the Loop

The WCEP experienced significant changes over the past year due to the effects of Covid-19, decreased enrollment, and two new faculty members. Despite these, the WCEP was successful in making progress toward many of the changes listed below. Because some of the changes were intended to be long term goals, the progress may have been slight and/or has not yet begun.

Changes described in 2020 Report:

- a. Analyze the ability of students in the Adolescent Certification Program to ask higher-order thinking questions and to give clear directions.
- b. Revise qualitative case study protocols
- c. Work with partners both within and outside of the college to develop a plan to recruit, retain, and graduate more pre-service teachers of color.
- d. Formalize connections to graduates and provide one on-line professional development opportunity to all graduates.
- e. Consider aligning program curriculum and assessment to state and national professional association standards and exploring ways to share teacher preparation content standards and completer data with A&S faculty and the WCEP Advisory Council.
- f. Formally work with psychology faculty to more deeply understand coursework in PSY courses in order to plan ways to assess application of learning theory in practica.
- g. More systematically teach, observe, and assess candidates' knowledge of and ability to implement CRP in the field.
- h. Consider faculty diversity in future opportunities to hire and in requirement for candidates' field work.

III. Examination of data collected for this year's targeted learning outcomes

2020 Changes	Data	Summary	Interpretation
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a	<i>Building Knowledge and Webquest Projects in EDUC 332</i> Close Reading Project Observations	-Students meeting criteria for successfully creating higher level questions over three years: 11/13 for the <i>Building Knowledge Project</i> 10/13 for the <i>Webquest Project</i> -Students design and provide exemplar answers for high quality questions	Student performance on the project indicates proficiency. Fieldwork observations, however, indicate weakness in this area. Revisions to the lesson plan project will require students to include at least two higher level questions
b	n/a		
c	Meeting with Admissions Office notes Admissions event	March 23 Meeting, discussed: -current enrollment concerns -current program offerings -current program details -addressing questions/misconceptions -future trajectory/plans	All stakeholders believed this meeting to be very beneficial and we are likely (have already) to see benefits to enrollment/recruitment
d	Completer Data; Exit Survey	Students provided contact information via the exit survey and indicated willingness to participate in further connections to WCEP	In order to establish and maintain connections, accurate contact information is pertinent
e	n/a		
f	n/a		
g	CPAST rubric items related to CRP EDUC 408 Inquiry Project	Line C: Assessment of P-12 learning Line D: Differentiated Methods Line T: Advocacy to Meet the Needs of Learners or for the Teaching Profession	Persists as an area of weakness, but growth and reflection was seen in project
h	Revised Rubric Interview Questions	Candidates' materials and interview responses are rated on a 1-5 scale in the column of "commitment to EDI" Candidates can either readily and successfully respond to the question with specificity or not.	

- a. *Analyze the ability of students in the Adolescent Certification Program to ask higher order thinking questions and to give clear directions.*

The data over the past three years shows that when specifically asked to create higher level questions, students are typically capable of doing that. For the Building Knowledge project, two out of thirteen students did not meet the criteria for successfully creating higher level questions, and for the WebQuest, three out of thirteen did not meet the criteria. The directions for these two assessments are very specific, and the guidance for each project leads to students creating higher level questions. Therefore, Professor Wansor decided to keep these two projects to help build these skills, and she refined a previous project. The Close Reading project requires students to come up with multiple questions that focus on getting classroom students to delve deeper into a reading of a text. This project requires students to write questions that focus on what the text says, how the text works, and what the text means. By doing this, students are scaffolding questions that get classroom students to think more critically. This project also requires students to create and provide an exemplar for each answer. This part shows whether or not the students can answer higher level questions.

During the spring semester, there were two students in EDUC 332. Both of these students met the criteria on all three projects for creating higher level questions. However, when observing students during fieldwork, this piece was still missing. Therefore, a future revision needs to be made in the Lesson Design project requirements. Students must be able to apply these skills when they are working directly with classroom students. Students are already required to include questions in their lesson plans, but these are typically checks for understanding. In the future, students will be required to include at least two higher level questions that require all classroom students to support their responses.

b. Revise qualitative case study protocols

Due to faculty turnover and restrictions from Covid-19, case studies were not conducted this year.

c. Work with partners both within and outside of the college to develop a plan to recruit, retain, and graduate more pre-service teachers of color.

The WCEP faculty met with four members of the admissions team on March 23, 2021. All parties agreed that there were a few issues and concerns at the present time. WCEP faculty shared that there are students who are seeking a major or certificate that is not offered by the WCEP (e.g. PE, Business). WCEP faculty want to increase diversity among candidates and increase candidates with majors/concentrations in the STEM fields. The WCEP has had very few transfer students in recent years in addition to the attrition of many students in the 2019–2021 academic year due to the accreditation probationary period. The WCEP faculty clarified the majors and certificates available as well as the program requirements such as the 3.0 GPA and six required courses for a minor. The WCEP shared about the new student organization, WAEC, as a selling point in addition to the cohort model of the WCEP and potential opportunities for loan forgiveness. The WCEP faculty clarified that we do not offer an early childhood certification; student teaching is one semester in which students may not play a sport and participate in two placements during their senior year or commonly in a fifth year for transfer students; students apply to the program in their sophomore year; students are generally able to fit in a study abroad experience; adolescence candidates complete a thesis in their major in a semester other than their student teaching; and, there is a current demand for teachers as many are retiring.

Professor Wansor also participated in a virtual Lakeside Lounge event on May 12th to speak with prospective/incoming students about the WCEP.

d. *Formalizing connections to graduates and providing one on-line professional development opportunity to all graduates.*

Two opportunities were formalized this year to establish connections with graduates. On May 6, Dr. Young and three student researchers of the WCEP presented their research and findings to in-person and remote audiences. Prior to the event, Dr. Young invited alum of the WCEP to attend the event, several of whom communicated interested, and a few of whom were in attendance. As part of EDUC 225, students conducted interviews with practitioners. Dr. Suriano reached out to WCEP alum to invite them to participate. Both of these events are likely to be recurring and can continue facilitating connections between current WCEP students, faculty, and the WCEP alum. Similarly, current students participating in these can look forward to serving in the role of alum upon graduation.

WCEP's administrative assistant, Linda Catino, is currently compiling and updating the list of graduates within the last five years with accurate contact information.

e. *WCEP is encouraged to consider aligning program curriculum and assessments to state and national professional association standards (e.g., NCTE, NCTM, NCSS, NSTA, NAEYC, CEC) and exploring ways to share teacher preparation content standards and completer data with A&S faculty and the WCEP Advisory Council.*

WCEP faculty are planning to discuss teaching and learning standards with A&S faculty in fall 2021. At this time, we will also discuss the opportunity for students within A&S majors to add adolescence certification and how the A&S faculty can communicate this opportunity with their advisees. WCEP will also be working to map course outcomes and assessments to InTasc standards assessed with the CPAST rubric and The Council for Exceptional Children's Initial Preparation Standards.

f. *WCEP faculty appear to informally work with PSY colleagues, primarily to plan the course schedules, not content. WCEP faculty is encouraged to more formally work with Psychology faculty on a regular basis to more deeply understand PSY course content and assessments, then plan ways to assess application of learning theory in practicum and student teaching practice.*

WCEP faculty are planning to meet with PSY faculty in Fall 2021. Due to Covid-19 WCEP students did not complete practicum and therefore assessing application of learning theory was not required/possible. Linda Catino created a resource to help students review learning theories.

g. *Faculty is encouraged to more systematically teach, observe and assess candidates' knowledge of and ability to implement culturally responsive practices in the field. This aspect is embedded in the course content and experiences in this program. Recommend pre-student teaching experiences in urban or urban ring placement for all WCEP candidates and professional learning opportunities for faculty and candidates to explore culturally responsive practices more deeply. Wells College student services transportation may be helpful as WCEP faculty strive to find ways to support and partner with high-need schools more consistently.*

This goal has been a high priority for the WCEP. There has been much time in discussion and programmatic revision to work toward meeting this goal. There are some barriers that are difficult to overcome that limit the success of meeting this goal, such as geographic distance to schools from Aurora. Field experiences for WCEP students must be scheduled within three-hour time blocks which limits access to urban schools within commuting distance. WCEP will seek to establish placements at Casey Park, Genesee, and Beverly J. Martin elementary schools to diversify experiences. These and other schools have at least 35% non-white students or higher than 70% eligible for free-reduced lunch.

At weekly meetings of the WCEP faculty, bolstering CRP was discussed on September 28, October 5, October 12, November 16, May 11 & 18.

Two course tasks were added to teach and assess candidates in the area of CRP. In EDUC 215, a midterm assessment was designed.

In EDUC 408, WCEP student teachers engaged in an inquiry project which required them to pose questions about their students' lives outside of the classroom and reflect on how an increased understanding impacts and improves their teaching. This task was designed to meet the course outcome: develop and apply knowledge of varied students' needs. They were asked to respond to the question: "How much do you feel that knowing about students outside of your classroom influences your instructional decisions?" In assessing these two categories, all students scored an 80% or better.

In EDUC 406, WCEP's adolescence candidates worked toward the course goal: plan and enact socially-just and culturally-proactive pedagogies through readings, discussion, and were assessed in a lesson plan assignment. Readings included excerpts from: Johnson, C.W., & Parry, D.C. (Eds.). (2015). *Fostering Social Justice through Qualitative Inquiry: A Methodological Guide* (1st ed.). Routledge; Christensen, L (2009). *Teaching for Joy and Justice: Re-imagining the Language Arts Classroom*. Milwaukee: Rethinking Schools Publication; Schmidt, P. R. (2005). *Culturally Responsive Instruction: Promoting Literacy in Secondary Content Areas*. Learning Point Associates; and relevant Education Week articles.

h. Consider faculty diversity in future opportunities to hire and consistent requirements that candidates work in at least one urban or urban ring school.

The search committee tasked with hiring a new visiting assistant professor of education in Spring 2021 revised the rubric for assessing applications. Each member of the search committee evaluated the candidates' materials in an "Commitment to EDI" category and evaluated responses to the interview questions: (1) What is your approach to dealing with discussions about topics such as race, religion, politics, or sexual orientation? Please provide a specific example; and (2) Tell us about one or two specific things that you have done to promote diversity, equity and/or inclusion in or out of the classroom.

IV-V. Program Changes with Action Plan for the Upcoming Year

The following goals have been created to continue working toward previously established goals and newly identified areas of need.

1. Improve scores on certification exams in the area of ELL knowledge

WCEP students' performance on the EAS certification exam indicates Domain 2 is an area of weakness. The scores fall below those of other independent colleges' students and statewide. The newly added Psycholinguistics course will help students learn strategies and knowledge to support English Language Learners. EDUC 215 will have new texts with content-specific updates and additions in the domain of ELLs. Students will be required to include ELL-specific strategies in the departmental lesson plan in addition to other differentiation methods.

Diversifying practicum experiences for WCEP students is also likely to have a positive impact in this area.

Domain 2 states that qualified pre-service teachers:

- a. identifies stages and patterns of first- and second-language acquisition and analyzes factors that affect students' English language acquisition and development (e.g., cognitive learning styles and strategies; cultural background; exceptionalities; prior experiences with the second language; interrupted, limited, or no formal education; teacher expectations; classroom environment; primary language; literacy in the primary language)
- b. demonstrates an understanding of the types and benefits of bilingualism and bilingual programs and the importance of viewing use of the primary language as a right and as an asset for English Language Learners
- c. applies knowledge of the legal rights of English Language Learners and ethical considerations related to the education of English Language Learners
- d. demonstrates knowledge of effective approaches for promoting English Language Learners' development of oral and written language proficiency in English, including adapting teaching strategies and materials
- e. demonstrates an understanding of similarities and differences between English literacy development for native English speakers and for English Language Learners, including how literacy development in the primary language influences literacy development in English, and applies strategies for helping English Language Learners transfer literacy skills in the primary language to English
- f. applies knowledge of research-based instructional strategies (e.g., providing scaffolding, using authentic tasks) for promoting literacy for English Language Learners at all stages of literacy development
- g. applies knowledge of strategies for supporting English Language Learners' development of content-area literacy skills and for teaching English Language Learners how to use literacy skills as tools for learning
- h. applies knowledge of criteria and procedures for evaluating, selecting, creating, and adjusting instructional materials and strategies and assessment systems and practices to meet the learning needs of English Language Learners and to promote their achievement of learning standards in all content areas
- i. identifies effective strategies for consulting and collaborating with students' families and support networks and with educators in the English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or bilingual education programs to meet the needs of English Language Learners and to promote their English language skills and academic prog

2. Revise qualitative case study protocols

The WCEP's qualitative case study of completers was originally designed to meet the standards of our previous accrediting body, CAEP. Professor Suriano will revise the case study protocol to better match AAQEP's standards and gather data the WCEP is currently interested in.

3. Formalize connections to graduates and provide one on-line professional development opportunity to all graduates

Based on the CPAST evaluation, this year's graduates received little to no professional development. We will utilize the areas of weakness identified by the CPAST scores to design upcoming opportunities. Dr. Suriano will be establishing a book club to support new teachers (recent graduates). The book has been chosen and a schedule is being established before invitations are sent. The book club will serve as an opportunity for support, networking, and as professional development through the content of the reading. We will seek feedback from participants to assess our success with this goal.

4. Formally work with psychology faculty to more deeply understand coursework in PSY courses in order to plan ways to assess application of learning theory in practicum experiences.

Based on the Portfolio Defense as the culminating assessment for EDUC 408 and the CPAST rubric for EDUC 410, discussing relevant research and theory and using it to justify instructional decisions is an area of weakness for students. WCEP faculty will meet on at least one occasion with PSY faculty in Fall 2021. We will look to these summative evaluations to assess our progress with this goal in Spring of 2022.

5. More systematically teach, observe, and assess candidates' knowledge of and ability to implement CRP in the field.

Based on CPAST scores and observation, in order to meet NYS's initiative to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, and in alignment with AAQEP, WCEP will continue to work toward this goal. The NYS Initiative posits that teachers should be: *Specifically acknowledging the role that racism and bigotry have played, and continue to play, in the American story; Adopting a Culturally Responsive and Sustaining (CR-S) Framework that embeds the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion by creating student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; fosters positive academic outcomes; develops students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevates historically marginalized voices; empowers students as agents of social change; and contributes to individual student engagement, learning, growth and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking; and Ensuring coherent opportunities for students to actively participate in experiences that prepare them for a lifetime of civic engagement and social justice activism, including, for example, completing capstone projects.* WCEP will incorporate this language into course instruction and assessment as well as to frame course goals. We will utilize students' performance on the EDUC 215 midterm project and CPAST scores to assess our success with this goal. Culturally Relevant is defined by CPAST as "incorporating the tenets of culturally relevant/responsive teaching; utilizes the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of the students to inform the teachers' lessons and methodology."